

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

September 19, 2004

Hon. David M. Stone
Administrator
Transportation Security Administration
Office of the Administrator
601 South 12th Street
Arlington, VA 22202-4220

Dear Administrator Stone,

I first would like to congratulate you on your recent confirmation as Administrator. I wish you the best of luck and pledge my support in the effort to the United States' transportation system safer.

I write today to express my concern about the state of security at foreign airports that directly or indirectly service the United States, and recommend steps the TSA can immediately take to rectify the situation. There have been several incidents, including the announcement that a New York bound passenger on a flight from Dubai was found carrying detonators, explosives, and ammunition, which have shed light on gaping holes in our foreign air security system.

While I realize how difficult it is to ensure that every flight coming in to the United States from around the world is completely secure, it is vital that we do all we can to prevent terrorists from exploiting this potential vulnerability. According to the Bureau of Transportation Statistics, almost 100,000 direct international flights came in to New York's two major international airports in 2003. This number does not include the countless connections travelers can make to get to the United States from even the most remote locations. Every one of these flights, if not thoroughly checked, offers a prime opportunity to strike the United States.

Most recently, TSA officers detained Shaun Marshall, a medic for defense contractor DynCorp Inc. after he arrived at John F. Kennedy International Airport on an August 19th flight from Dubai, and discovered that he successfully carried a "Soviet V429E projectile point detonating fuse and a 23mm Society military full-round surface-to-air and air-to-air cartridge." According to the New York Police Department bomb squad, these materials are "highly explosive". The fact that Mr. Marshall got these items on to an aircraft bound for New York is unacceptable.

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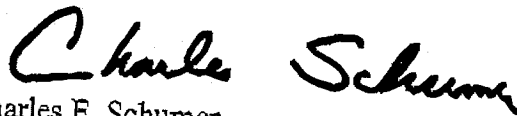
I support the initial steps the TSA has taken to ensure the security of foreign commercial aircraft, and agree that all foreign carriers should be subject to United States regulations in order to fly to the US. However, I believe that not enough is being done to ensure that foreign airports are complying with TSA specified restrictions and security procedures.

I urge you to conduct a worldwide review of foreign airports that can service the United States, either directly or indirectly, to confirm that no passenger can enter the US without undergoing a TSA approved screening. In addition, only having 20 TSA representatives stationed worldwide is clearly not enough. I believe this program should be expanded ten-fold immediately, with added coverage focused on potential terrorist hot-spots.

After this is completed, I believe it should be the policy of the TSA and the Department of Transportation to suspend the flight privileges of any air carrier, or airport, not complying with TSA specifications. It is too risky to permit flights with passengers who have not been screened in to the United States.

I urge you take up these recommendations as soon as possible. Had Mr. Marshall possessed hostile intentions, New York, and the country, could have again be beaten by terrorists and struck yet again.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Charles E. Schumer". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Charles E. Schumer
US Senator